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FM USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3286

INFO RUCNIRA/IRAN COLLECTIVE PRIORITY

RUEHGG/UN SECURITY COUNCIL COLLECTIVE PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L USUN NEW YORK 001137

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 12/07/2017

TAGS: PARM IR MNUC KNNP

SUBJECT: U/S ROOD BRIEFS UN SECRETARY-GENERAL ON IRAN/NIE

REF: STATE 162558

Classified By: AMBASSADOR ALEX WOLFF, FOR REASONS 1.4 B/D

¶1. (C) Summary: On December 6, Undersecretary John Rood briefed Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon on the recent National Intelligence Estimate (NIE) on Iran. Rood stressed that the NIE does not diminish USG concerns regarding Iran's nuclear weapons program and, if anything, heightens our concerns. The Secretary-General said he would continue to press the Iranians to "come clean" on the nuclear issue, and would continue to urge the Iranians to meet their IAEA and UN Security Council obligations. Ban concluded by saying he was fully committed to a satisfactory conclusion of this issue. End summary.

¶2. (C) U/S Rood, accompanied by Ambassador Wolff, Kurt Kessler (ISN), Eric Arnette (INR) and Peter Kujawinski (USUN notetaker), met December 6 with SYG Ban and his personal staff to brief on the release of the NIE on Iran. Rood noted 4 key points: 1) the NIE does not diminish USG concerns; if anything, they are heightened; 2) the USG is committed to moving forward with a third Security Council Resolution, and would like to move before Christmas; 3) Iran needs to come clean with all aspects of its nuclear program and to acknowledge past behavior; and 4) the NIE concludes that Iran halted its nuclear weapons effort in 2003, but the U.S. believes this is a tactical - not a strategic - decision. Iran is "laying low" and could restart its effort at any time. He added that the key pacing item in Iran's nuclear efforts is nuclear enrichment, which it continues to do in defiance of UN Security Council Resolutions. The U.S. is encouraged by the conclusion that Iran halted its efforts in 2003; this shows that diplomacy and pressure are working.

¶3. (C) Ban said he recently received numerous inquiries from media organizations asking him to comment on the NIE. He had demurred, and had reiterated his basic position that Iran needs to comply with the SC Resolutions. He asked whether he could respond (if asked by a journalist) whether he had received a briefing by the U.S. Rood replied that the SYG should feel free to acknowledge receiving a briefing by the U.S., if asked. In addition, Ban asked whether Iran's decision to halt its weapons efforts is still in force.

Rood said the U.S. intelligence community believes that this halt is still in place, but reiterated our assessment that the halt is tactical, not strategic. Ban asked for comment on the 12/6 New York Times article that reports on the NIE. Rood reiterated that the U.S. has high confidence in the information that resulted in the conclusions of the NIE.

¶4. (C) Ban turned to SC action, and asked whether Russia and China would still back a third resolution. Ambassador Wolff said that contacts with the Russian and Chinese governments subsequent to publication of the NIE indicate that both countries are still willing to consider a third resolution. Both countries had agreed to a third resolution if Iran responded negatively to either the IAEA track or the Solana,

and it was clear that the Solana track had encountered a clear setback.

¶ 15. (C) Kim Won-soo, Ban's deputy chief of staff, noted that the timing of the NIE's release was "strange." Rood replied that there was no political aspect to the timing, and that the NIE's report was released according to the internal deadlines of the intelligence community.

¶ 16. (C) Ban thanked Rood for the briefing and concluded by saying, "I am very much committed to the final resolution of this issue." He said he will continue to urge the Iranians to "come clean" regarding the nuclear issue and to press the Iranians to fulfill their IAEA and UNSC obligations. Ban said he looks forward to "close coordination" on this issue with the U.S.

¶ 17. (U) Undersecretary Rood cleared this message.
Khalilzad